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S U M M A R Y

SOUTHEAST ASIA

25X1

- [REDACTED]
2. Faure raises possibility of military withdrawal from Indochina (page 3).

NEAR EAST - AFRICA

3. Comment on Menderes-Tito conversations in Belgrade (page 4).

WESTERN EUROPE

4. Comment on current British attitude on East-West talks (page 5).

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25X1

2. Faure raises possibility of military withdrawal from Indochina:

25X1

In preliminary talks on Indochina with Secretary Dulles on 8 May, Premier Faure raised the possibility of a complete withdrawal of French forces from Indochina unless Vietnamese premier Diem is replaced. Faure insisted that Diem is leading to catastrophe and that France will not continue with him.

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Comment: A French withdrawal prior to the planned all-Vietnam elections of 1956 would constitute a disavowal of France's responsibilities under the Geneva accords and thus open the way for Communist charges that France had capitulated to the American policy of "turning South Vietnam into a base for military aggression." The French have consistently urged a rigorous application of the Geneva accords.

The French government is determined to avoid the onus for any further disaster in Indochina, and Faure's relatively strong parliamentary situation may encourage him not to temporize. Mendes-France's recent success in winning control of the party machinery of the premier's Radical Socialist Party will incite Faure to prove himself a man of "movement," possibly by a bold decision to quit Indochina.

Under current French repatriation plans, all but 75,000 of the French troops in Indochina will have been withdrawn by July.

NEAR EAST - AFRICA

3. Comment on Menderes-Tito conversations in Belgrade:

Turkish prime minister Menderes' conversations with Marshal Tito in Belgrade apparently failed to resolve the fundamental question of Balkan pact-NATO co-ordination. The Turkish ambassador in Belgrade told Ambassador Riddleberger on 8 May that Menderes was dissatisfied with the course of the conversations and that he regarded Tito's attitude as frequently contradictory and obscure. While Tito re-emphasized that continued development of good relations with the West is fundamental in Yugoslav policy, he apparently believes that a workable equilibrium has been established between the East and West.

The Turkish ambassador said that, while Tito denied wanting NATO dissolved, he deplored ideological trends within NATO. When Menderes broached the question

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of Balkan pact-NATO co-ordination, Tito said this step should take place only "in an emergency." Menderes replied that it would then be too late.

Riddleberger believes that Menderes' disappointment was caused by Tito's reluctance to agree to some modus operandi for military co-ordination, a reluctance which Menderes regards as running out on a commitment.

WESTERN EUROPE

4. Comment on current British attitude on East-West talks:

25X1

Prime Minister Eden's public insistence on East-West talks "at the summit" is primarily an election maneuver, but nevertheless a commitment which cannot be disregarded. British officials at the tripartite meetings in London on East-West talks have argued that no British government could propose anything less during an election campaign. Primarily for the same reason, they want the agenda for such talks to be general enough to cover all outstanding East-West issues except Far Eastern questions.

The new British government to be formed after the 26 May elections will probably not be prepared to enter talks with the USSR before mid-July, and British officials are unwilling at present to discuss substantive proposals. They insist that East-West talks should aim at concrete results, however, and state that the West must be ready to offer something more than it did at the Berlin conference in 1954.

British officials have stated [redacted] a foreign ministers' meeting before a conference of heads of government may be neither necessary nor proper. On disarmament, they state that they would be satisfied with urging greater progress within the United Nations framework.

25X6